

Meeting Date: November 27, 2013

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SACRAMENTO - SAN JOAQUIN
DELTA CONSERVANCY
A California State Agency

1450 Halyard Drive, Suite 6
West Sacramento, CA 95691
www.deltaconservancy.ca.gov

PROGRAM AND POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

October 16, 2013

SUMMARY: October 16, 2013 Meeting

The Subcommittee received information about Board actions regarding pending legislation and program updates.

Delta Dialogues: In the September Board meeting, staff was directed to research and report to the Subcommittee issues related to Delta Dialogues participation and the role of the Conservancy in convening the group, specifically addressing the issue of observers to the process. Moving forward, no more than two voting members of the Conservancy Board will participate in Delta Dialogue meetings (verbal report to be presented during the Board meeting).

Board Actions Regarding Legislation: There are two related issues: (1) the governor's budget process, including Budget Change Proposal discussions and (2) the Board's and Conservancy's role regarding pending legislation and ballot measures. This issue was raised because the Conservancy has been unsuccessful in getting additional state funding for its programs, and the question was raised if the Board had a role in assisting the Conservancy in its efforts to work with the Administration.

Regarding the budgetary processes, there are two competing needs. There are barriers to accessing the governor's proposed budget. However, the Conservancy Board, as an independent body established in law, has a right to information in order to make informed decisions regarding the Conservancy's finances. The subcommittee discussed the possibility of creating an ad hoc committee of the Board chair and the subcommittee chair, who could meet with the Executive Officer and Administration officials to discuss proposals that could become part of the governor's budget. No decision was made.

The subcommittee discussed the Board's role regarding pending legislation, specifically the water bond proposals. The Board is an independent body and as such, can legally take positions on pending legislation. Unlike other state agencies that have directors appointed by the governor, the Conservancy's executive officer can testify at Legislative hearings to report the position of the Board. As a matter of practice, the Board may adopt a resolution capturing the motion that authorizes the executive officer to represent the position of the Board in each instance.

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Specifically regarding the water bond, the Board can work with the Legislature while the bond is being deliberated; once it is on the ballot, however, the rules change dramatically. No public money can be spent on any election or ballot measures. The Board can take a position on ballot measures but must proceed cautiously; as a state entity, it can only provide information about ballot measures as long as the information conveys full and impartial information. Government agencies may not take sides during an election.

The subcommittee asked staff to prepare a report comparing the Senate and Assembly versions of the water bond, and the water bond principles written by the subcommittee and the Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife subcommittee. This report will be completed for the December 18, 2013, subcommittee meeting.

Program Updates: The subcommittee received updates about the following projects: Delta Branding and Marketing, Delta Arundo Control and Restoration Program; Habitat Tracking, Assessment, and Reporting project; September's Delta waterway cleanup; Delta Dialogues fundraising, Conservancy-sponsored workshops, implementation plan schedule, and the website redesign project.

Potential Future Agenda Items: The subcommittee suggested the following as potential future agenda items for its meetings: developing a Conservancy project that could be funded by the water contractors, and developing a strategy to keep legacy towns and Delta businesses viable should the tunnels be built.

Next Meeting: The subcommittee agreed to meet on Wednesday, December 18, 2013, from 3-5 p.m.

Contact Person:

Nancy Ullrey, Program Lead

Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy

Phone: (916) 375-2087